



Diamond Middle School

District: Diamond R-4 School District

Enrollment: 263

Grade Range: 5-8



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The mission of the Diamond R-IV Schools is to prepare each student to become a productive member of society.

Diamond Middle School is located in scenic southwest Missouri in the rural community of Diamond. Diamond, a part of the “Four States” area where Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas meet, is a quaint town with a rich mining history. The Diamond area has a current population of 807 citizens and includes some of the earliest settlements in Newton County. George Washington Carver’s boyhood home is located less than three miles from the middle school campus and has been the site of George Washington Carver National Park since 1943.

Drawing Strength from Generations of Support

Many of Diamond Middle School’s current students are children and/or grandchildren of former students. The constancy that comes with generational stability is enhanced by a deep sense of pride that is apparent throughout the school district. The continuing support of a community that is invested in its children has been an integral part of Diamond Middle School’s success as staff and students have weathered the typical “growing pains” of opening a new school, as well as some unusually difficult situations that they have faced along the way.

Diamond Middle School originated seven years ago and became its own entity in 2001, when the patrons of the district, realizing that two facilities were no longer adequate to house a growing student population, passed a bond issue to build a new high school. When high school students took residence in that building at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year, middle school students vacated the elementary wing and two trailers they had occupied and moved into the 12-year-old former high school building. Once the middle school became physically independent from the elementary building, staff and parents worked to make the former high school a home for over 200 students in grades six through eight. At the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year, fifth grade students became a part of the middle school configuration.

With the support of their community, the staff and students of Diamond Middle School have persevered through unsettling events including multiple changes in building and district leadership and the building and grade configuration changes already mentioned. Since 2001, however, Diamond Middle School has enjoyed a stable, positive learning environment with the same principal in place and very little teacher turnover. The staff is dedicated to and knowledgeable about the emotional, physical, and social needs of the middle school child, and works diligently to ensure each student’s success. Teachers exemplify the district’s beliefs about children and truly value each child and work to meet his/her needs.

“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”

- ***Project CAT*** – Project CAT (Citizenship, Attitude, and Teamwork) encourages all Diamond Middle School Wildcats to demonstrate good character and citizenship. Students participate as a class, and points are awarded for good behavior in the hallways and cafeteria, positive referrals from teachers, highest grade point average, volunteer work, attendance, and fewest discipline referrals. At the end of each quarter, the class that earns the most points receives a large prize, such as the privilege of having a lock-in.
- ***Common Study Skills Class*** – Fifth grade students have a common study skills class conducted in seminar format, with students having time to access all core area fifth grade teachers, in addition to receiving instruction in skills related to success in school.
- ***Outdoor Education Day*** – In a cross-curricular activity held at George Washington Carver National Park, students collect water samples at the park pond, participate in a scavenger hunt for historical information, calculate information gathered from land surveys, conduct gravestone rubbings, and write obituaries for the deceased.

“Socking it to the MAP” – Diamond Middle School Students Achieve Excellence

Diamond Middle School staff consistently provides opportunities for each student to achieve at the maximum level of his or her capacity. Teachers use visual, auditory, and tactile-kinesthetic, as well as performance-based activities that engage students, challenging them to achieve at higher levels. Cooperative group activities are a component of each class, and students have opportunities to participate in peer-tutoring experiences at all grades. The Accelerated Reader program and journal writing activities support reading and writing across the curriculum. Teachers frequently use constructed response items in assessing students’ progress and hold students accountable for well written responses to questions.

In addition to providing engaging, academically rich activities for students on a daily basis, Diamond Middle School also incorporates a variety of incentives to encourage students to perform to the best of their ability on MAP assessments. This is especially important since MAP data provide the faculty with evaluative data to assess students’ strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of teaching practices. To set a tone of seriousness during MAP assessment week, the building is “shut down;” the intercom and bells are turned off, and students are not in the hallways or passing between buildings during testing time.

“WORDS OF WISDOM”

- ***“Support and involvement of community and parents in the school is crucial to building a sense of larger community.”***
- ***“The school staff believes that reading and writing is central to student success in all areas.”***
- ***“When students feel good about themselves and what they are doing, they are more ready to share that positive attitude with those around them and to become productive members of society.”***

To maintain a positive atmosphere during testing week, the principal designates the week prior to the test as “MAP Spirit Week” with activities revolving around a theme relating to effort on the MAP. During this year’s “Sock It To The MAP” week, students participated in 50’s era activities and concluded the week with an all-school “MAP-tivity” day.

At Diamond Middle School, teachers, administrators, parents, students, and the community share the responsibility for fulfilling their mission of preparing students to become productive members of society.